1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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# XXXIII

# THE TALENSE

## *History; Tribal, Clan, and* Soog' *Organization*

INTRODUCTORY: The Talense occupy the area shown on the map. According to the 1921 census report they number 29,972 persons of both sexes. Specimens of the language, called Talene or Talen', have been given in Chapter III. Their appearance, their houses, customs, religion, and organization all seem to me to be very similar to those of their neighbours, the Nankanse. Their languages, too, are very much alike. Had the Talense not been labelled with a separate appellation, I doubt if the anthropologist—save after, perhaps, a very minute investigation—would have considered it necessary to deal with them as a group distinct from the Namnam and the Nankanse. Nevertheless, in accordance with the plan which I mapped out, I have done so. Rites and customs, already investigated, discussed, and described, are here approached from a different angle. Results so obtained are always valuable, even where there is a certain inevitable repetition. The process serves also to fill gaps in the work which has gone before, to which the information obtained later may be considered as supplementary.

In dealing with this and the remainder of the tribes, I have endeavoured to group my facts, as far as possible, under the chapter headings already adopted. This arrangement will enable my readers the more readily to piece together the sum total of the data available concerning any one particular subject, and I hope will mitigate somewhat the defects in presentation for which I have already apologized.

The history of the tribal wanderings of this people follows the same lines as that with which we are now familiar. This history is the record of the migrations, not of the tribe *qua* tribe, but of every clan, the composite of which now forms the group called the Talense (s. Talɛŋa; language Talene.) The tribal histories, specimens of which are about to be related, tell of the migrations (within comparatively narrow limits of time and space) of the groups which have for some hundreds of years supplied the Territorial Rulers. Of the wanderings of the original people themselves, who are now largely merged with this foreign element, nothing is really known, except that they were undoubtedly of the stock which I have termed the 'Mole group', who seem to

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have been the original inhabitants of these parts for a much longer period than can be claimed for their aristocracy.

The chief Talense 'towns', in the sense with which we are now familiar, are as follows: Tɔngo, Bade, Gorogo, Si, Winduri, Ten'zugu, Tilega, Yamdiga, Biuŋ, Siega, Duse, Datoko, Gbee, Kpantia, Kpale, Wakyiga, Gbeogo, Zandoya, and Gbea. These settlements, including the subjects of the Chief of Kurugu, now constitute the Talense tribe.

*History of Tɔngo* (as told me by the present Chief, Kpama): 'We (i.e. his ancestors) came from Mampurugu, which we left owing to a quarrel between *Misore* and his younger brother—whose name we do not know—about the Chieftainship. *Misore* left Mampurugu in consequence and came first to Bɔŋo, thence to Saamere; from there he passed through a dense bush and came to the hills. (The Tɔng hills.) At the foot of these hills we found a people whom our ancestors called Gundugo or Talense. We intermarried with these people and have all become Talense. *Misore* died here; his grave is marked by a big baobab tree. He was succeeded by his son, *Seyene*, who, now that his father was dead, returned to Mampurugu[1] and received from the Chief the Chieftainship of Tɔngo. *Seyene* died, and was succeeded by his brother, *Nambogeda*, who also returned to Mampurugu to ask for the Chieftainship. He died, and was succeeded by his younger brother, *Bɔyayeret*, a son of *Seyene*. About this time, the Chief of Mampurugu made one of his son's Chief of Kurugu, and placed Tɔngo under Kurugu. *Bɔyayeret* was succeeded by his "brother" *Sayepele*, a son of *Seyene*, who reported to Kurugu and held his Chieftainship from that ruler. *Sayepele* was succeeded by his brother *Nodeyene* (lit. Short-fowl). *Nodeyene* was succeeded by his younger brother, *Lebsekora* (Old-things-change). He, in turn, was succeeded by *Kusii* (Worn-out-hoe), a son of *Bɔyayaret*. He was succeeded by *Bileu*, who was succeeded by *Lobsaab* (Throw-away-food), his brother, who, in turn, was succeeded by *Belemsale*, his half-brother, who was succeeded by *Belemboo*, a son of *Kusii*. In his time a great famine came, and many people were sold (to the Dagomba). He was succeeded by *Kabu*, a son of *Lobsaab*. *Lobsaab* was succeeded by *Sapelega* (White-clouds), a half-brother of *Kabu*. *Sapelega* was succeeded by *Kakora*, a son of *Bileu*. He was followed by *Nekay*, a son of *Kusii*; followed by *Paheban*, son of *Belemsale*; *Sagbon* (Dark-cloud), *Lebenwana*, *Bupaa*, son of *Kusii*;

[1] Mampurugu, as we shall see later, was the seat of the Head of the foreign element, who, coming somewhere from the eastward, had founded the empires of Mampruse, Moshi, and Dagomba.

1: Rattray E. G-S (ca. 1920) 1932
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NAMNAM

# XXXVIII

# THE NAMNAM

## *History, Tribal and Clan Organization*

101 THE Namnam (*Anglice* Nabdams) are a tribe numbering 8,063.
161 They inhabit the triangular strip of country bounded on the east
131 by the Red Volta; the Talense lie to the south, the Nankanse on the west. They are among the smallest of the Northern Territory tribes. The people call themselves Namnam (sing. Nabt), the language Nabte, and their country Nabrug. The Namnam call the Kasena, Yuls, and the Nankanse, Gurse; the Kanjagas, Bulse, and the Mampruse and Dagomba, Dagbwan. Specimens of the Nabte language have been given in Chapter III.

103 The capital town (*teŋa*) of the head Chief is Nangoot (*Anglice*
173 Nangode). The following history was given me by the head Chief:
167 'Our first ancestors were called *Loro* and *Zan*. *Zan* is the name of a
563 tree which was this ancestor's *segere*. There was a quarrel about the
622 Chieftainship at Naleruk (Naleregu, near Gambaga) and these
793 ancestors of ours, who were full brothers, left Gambaga and first settled near a place called Gos, in the Kusase country. There was nothing but thorn scrub there, so the place was named Namgoel, "the Chieftainship of thorns". We quarrelled with the Kusase and came here and gave the place its name. When we came here, we found a people who had not any Chiefs, only *Ten'danam* (*Ten'dama*). They spoke the language now called Nabte. Our people followed *Loro*, and *Zan* became the first Chief. He died and is buried here. The people whom we overtook here, we called Namnam. We became their Chiefs.
[421] We own the people, the *Ten'danam* own the land. The present *Ten'dan'* is called Biriwanab, his grove (*tengwan*) is known as Dakyirig. The *Ten'dan'* makes sacrifices to the land. *Ten'danam* are like your European doctors. *Zan* was succeeded by *Dyeten*. I think he was *Zan's* son, but
[778] it is a long time ago. Each Chief when he dies has a stone which is bathed, rubbed over with shea butter, and kept in the compound of the new Chief in a room. These stones are called *kpwim kuga* (spirit-stones). A sacrifice is made once a year to them. *Dyeten* was succeeded by *Pubuge*. During his time, we heard that the black gun-men (Ashanti?) came with war and reached Akorog (lit. the River). We met them with arrows and had many men taken captive.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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Kusase

# XXXIX

## THE KUSASE

### *Tribal and Clan Organization. The* Tenedan'

THE Kusase are a large tribe, numbering over 40,000, which inhabits the extreme north-eastern corner of the Northern Territories. They also extend across the border into the mandated territory of Togoland. The people call themselves *Kusase*, singular *Kusa*, and their language *Kusal*.[1] Specimens of this dialect have been given in previous chapters. They do not apply the name Gurense to themselves as do the Nankanse.

*Clans*: The word used in the vernacular is *budi*. A son acquires the clan of his father. Here, for the first time, we encounter a departure from the more common practice of using the totem name to designate the clan. A Kusa, if asked his clan, will give the name, not of its totem, but of the male ancestor from whom all his fellow-clansmen trace descent. On inquiring further, he will then state what is his clan taboo. This departure from the usual practice will also be noted later on among the Lobi. Here again, we find particular clans grouped in certain towns, town again having the meaning of 'area' or 'settlement' rather than township in the commonly accepted sense. The following table illustrates the above.

| *Town.* | *Clan.* | *Clan Taboo.* |
|---|---|---|
| Gagbir.[2] | Zuos. | *Waf tetar* (lit. big snake i.e. python). |
| Garu. | Nabt. | *Sur.* (The heart of any animal). |
| Kugri. | Nabt. | *Sur.* (The heart of any animal). |
| Timpale. | Nabt. | *Tunig* (a kind of fish with sharp teeth). |
| Pusig. | Zuos. | Python. |

The towns of Bindur, Bugur, Zabuk, Timpan, Bawk' also contain a number of Zuos clansmen. Bawk (Bawku)[3] are really Mampruse, not

[1] Kusal is so much like Mole that an officer learned the former language by mistake for the latter and was duly examined by a language board and passed, much to the amusement of critics of the said board. They had, however, every excuse for doing so, the laugh really being against those who, because these languages had different names, thought they were not related. Curiously enough, however, Kusase and Moshi do not intermarry (see p. 390).

[2] *Anglice* Kagbiri.

[3] The *Tenedan'* is, however, a Zuos.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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to another, ranging from 25 inches to 45 inches per annum, but fluctuations occur from year to year in the same area. Erratic or abnormal rains may so disturb the cycle of food production as to subject a majority of the population to severe privation. The temperature in the vicinity of 10° 30′ N. latitude and 0° 30′ W. longitude varies from a minimum of about 70° F. to a maximum of about 93° F. A characteristic feature of the dry season is the harmattan, a hot parching wind laden with fine dust which blows from the Sahara, so strongly at times as to obscure the landscape in a haze which limits visibility to a few hundred yards. Heavy dew and mists cause the mornings to be chilly and bracing, so much so that the natives squat shivering round fires or remain indoors until the sun is high; from the forenoon until about 4 p.m. the sun blazes relentlessly through the faint haze; sunset ushers in a cool and balmy evening; and night brings a relatively marked drop in temperature. Violent nocturnal tornadoes from the east and north-east, accompanied by lightning and thunder, introduce the rainy season, during which the prevailing wind blows from the direction of the Gulf of Guinea, to the south and south-east. During this season the temperature remains fairly stable throughout the day. Though it is never as hot as in the hottest days of the dry season, the humidity makes it at times excessively oppressive. The peak of the rains comes in August–September. It rains so heavily then that many social activities are impeded. These conditions of vegetation and climate fundamentally influence the economy and the social life of the inhabitants of the Sudanese Zone.

This book is concerned with the population of a very small section of the Sudanese Zone, a part of the region drained by the Volta river system. The head-waters of this system lie in French West Africa. About 20 miles south of the international boundary between the Gold Coast and French Ivory Coast, which has been arbitrarily fixed to coincide approximately with the eleventh parallel N. latitude, the Red Volta flows into the White Volta. Between these two rivers, on the east and south respectively, and the Sissili river on the west lies an area, arbitrarily truncated on the north by the international boundary, comprising two of the most heavily populated administrative districts of the Gold Coast. The eastern third of this area constitutes the administrative district of Zuarungu, the remaining two-thirds the district of Navrongo. The Red Volta separates Zuarungu district from another administrative unit, Kusaasi, and the White Volta forms a natural boundary between it and the Mamprusi district, to the south of which lies the territory of the Dagomba.

As the following table[1] from the census of 1931 shows, the Zuarungu district is the most densely populated part of this area; and as the population tends to be concentrated in the centre and north, the actual density of settlement exceeds the figures given. In some localities this is reflected

[1] See *Appendices containing Comparative Returns and General Statistics of the 1931 Census*, Gold Coast, 1932, p. 3; and Cardinall, A. W., *The Gold Coast*, 1931, Population Map, p. 156. Mr. Cardinall remarks (p. 123) that 'A majority of the census officers were of opinion that the figures collected by them are lower than they should have been by from 2 per cent. to 10 per cent.'—a contingency inevitable in a country which is for the most part still pre-literate.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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attractive touch to an otherwise uninspiring landscape. A fringe of uninhabited bush, the home of a fair amount of game, follows the course of the two Voltas. From the Tong Hills the area of close settlement and perennial cultivation spreads out like a fan to the west, north, and east. Generally speaking, settlement is relatively sparse and recent along the periphery of this area, except in the north to north-west segment, and densest and most ancient in the middle.

The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast have been under effective Government control for about twenty-five years. From the first efforts were made to develop modern communications. At the present time a main road, suitable for motor traffic, connects Bawku in Kusaasi district, the northernmost administrative station, with Tamale, the capital of the Northern Territories, 145 miles to the south, and continues from there to Kumasi in Ashanti, another 220 miles. Branches link it with the principal Government stations in the Northern Territories. This road system was maintained, until recently, only for essential services in the wet season, but was always passable in the dry season. In 1936 large-scale works were undertaken to make it a permanent highway. Head carriage and footpaths still remain the only means of local transport and communications. About 50 miles of this road system traverse the Zuarungu district, the administrative head-quarters of which is at Zuarungu (Talni, *Zuwaruŋ*) on the central road.

The people we are concerned with in this book occupy less than half of the Zuarungu district. Their country, which, for convenience of reference may be called Taleland, embraces most of the southern half of the district between the two Voltas and the western boundary. On the north it can be demarcated only by an arbitrary boundary which extends in a wavy line from Zuarungu due east to the river. A typical section of the district, Taleland includes the Tong Hills, the vicinity of which harbours the densest and oldest settlements of the country. Its total population, according to the 1931 census, numbers about 35,000. Nearly a third of it is concentrated within a radius of two or three miles of the Hills. I estimate the total area of Taleland at about 300 square miles, which would imply an average population density of approximately 100 to the square mile, though the actual density of settlement in the inhabited areas must be considerably higher. Thus Taleland is thickly populated, by African standards.

### *Cultural Affinities of the Tallensi*

Delafosse, in his monumental survey[1] of the peoples of the western Sudan, distinguished five 'families' by ethnological and linguistic criteria. His largest division, the Voltaic family, comprises the tribes inhabiting the basin of the Volta rivers, from approximately 9° 30′ to 14° N. latitude.[2] Delafosse subdivides the Voltaic family into seven branches, one of which, the Mossi group, includes all the peoples living between Ouagadougou in the French Upper Ivory Coast and Salaga in the Gold Coast.

More recent research has not invalidated Delafosse's broad classification.

[1] Delafosse, M., *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, 3 vols., 1912.
[2] Op. cit., i, pp. 115 ff.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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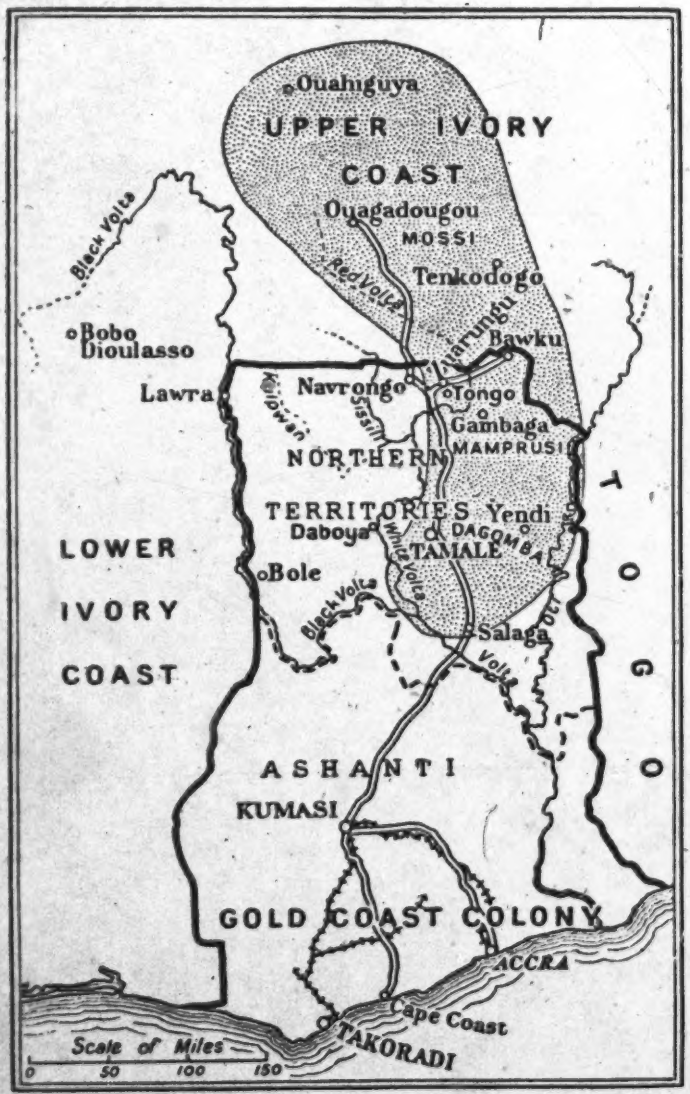


BOUNDARIES OF THE GOLD COAST

The dotted portion shows the area occupied by Mole-Dagbane speaking peoples

[p. 5]

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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197 Westermann has shown[1] that the Voltaic tribes all speak languages belonging to the *Gur* group of Sudanic languages. The Mossi (or, more accurately, the Mole-Dagbane speaking) group all speak Mole-Dagbane dialects, which form a distinct branch of the *Gur* family. The people of Taleland speak a Dagbane dialect. From Zuarungu northwards Mole influence is linguistically predominant.

171 The cultural uniformity of the Voltaic region is equally strikingly shown in forms of social and economic organization, in custom, belief, and material culture. Though local variations are great and have important sociological implications, as we shall find, the common patterns and contents are obvious.[2]

Among the Voltaic peoples, the Mossi, the Dagomba, and the Mamprusi have centralized forms of political organization of the type common throughout West Africa. The aristocracies of the three nations claim to be kinsfolk descended from conquering immigrants who established themselves first in the country of the Mamprusi and spread northwards and southwards from there. The three paramount chiefs still maintain ceremonial ties accounted for by quasi-mythical traditions of kinship and migration well known in all three countries.

101 619 Between these centralized states stretches a block of tribes which seem to have no political unity. Each so-called tribe appears to be independent of and sporadically at enmity with its neighbours, and there is no overriding central authority. Nor does the tribe seem to have any internal political unity.

167 619 648 We owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes comprise two major groups of communities. On the one side are those that claim to be the descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. The two groups are found in every tribe, including the Mossi, Mamprusi, and Dagomba, living side by side and indistinguishable from one another by broad cultural or linguistic criteria. Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chiefship similar to those of the Mamprusi. In fact the Paramount Chief of Mampurugu appoints many of their chiefs. But this is symbolical of kinship and ideological ties, not of political suzerainty. For though these communities may be regarded as the distant outliers of the Mampuru social and political structure, they are politically independent of the Mamprusi.

[113] [1] Westermann, D., *Die westlichen Sudansprachen und ihre Beziehungen zum Bantu*, pp. 121 ff.; and in Rattray, R. S., *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, chap. iv.

[2] The literature on this area is scanty and of very unequal value. The following are the most informative ethnographical monographs, in order of reliability: Rattray, op. cit.; Delafosse, op. cit.; Labouret, H., *Les Tribus de Rameau Lobi*, Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, Paris, 1931; Tauxier, L., *Les Noirs du Soudan*, Paris, 1912; id., *Les Noirs du Yatenga*, Paris, 1917; Dim Delobsom, A. A., *L'Empire du Mogho-Naba*, Institut de Droit Comparé, Études de Sociologie et d'Ethnologie juridiques, Paris, 1932; Cardinall, A. W., *Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, London, 1925.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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has brought them. But in the background there still lurk traces of fear and suspicion, a sense of the inscrutability of the white man.

The influence of British rule has naturally been most marked in Tale political life. At first it was directed towards two main ends: to maintain the peace between the Administration and the native communities as well as amongst the latter, and to ensure a sufficient supply of labour and local materials from the native population for keeping up roads and rest houses. The Administrative officers laid down boundaries, meted out justice, and backed up chiefs and headmen, mostly appointed by themselves, in the exercise of coercive powers over the mass of the people. Nothing was known about the country or the people, and the Administrative officers had to rely on their own sense of justice and their own ideas of what was in the interests of the population. The natives look back on this period with few regrets. They describe it as a time when extortion was widely practised not only by the police, the soldiers, the interpreters, and others who stood between them and the District Commissioners, but also by their newly empowered chiefs and headmen. They learnt to think of any official or unofficial servant of the white man as armed with arbitrary authority which it would be futile to resist.

The outstanding political changes due to this period were the authority given to chiefs and headmen, and the unofficial tribunals held by them. These grew up gradually out of the need to keep the peace; for the ancient method of settling disputes was by negotiation backed by armed self-help. From the native point of view the most valuable relic of this period is the embryonic legal system which grew up then. Armed self-help has disappeared, but some of the values connected with it remain. The other institutions of the native political organization retain their vigour. They function side by side with the institutions imposed by British rule, for they serve different ends and correspond to different values. It is often an uneasy partnership leading to insoluble conflicts. Most of the political troubles of the Tallensi since 1921 can be traced to the clash between interests and loyalties springing from the native political system and those created by the new political dispensation and its accompanying economic changes. For the first time in its history a few men of outstanding wealth have arisen in Taleland by extorting goods and services from their fellows on the strength of their political powers, or by exploiting opportunities due to the opening up of the country. And this has brought social friction in its train.

This period of British rule came to an end about 1931. Between 1931 and 1936 the Administration undertook a complete political reorganization of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. The principles of what is commonly called Indirect Rule were applied. Native Authorities were established, a graded scale of direct taxation was introduced, a policy of economic development was started, and social services were multiplied. The effects of this policy will not be discernible for some years.

Taleland is a very small portion of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. But in its culture and social structure, as in its geography and climate, it is typical of the whole plateau north of the Gambaga scarp.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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## CHAPTER II

## THE MEANING OF 'TALLENSI'

### *Tribal Divisions*

101 TALELAND is, as we have seen, merely a portion of a far greater, ecologically uniform region, marked off only by an artificial boundary. The same kind of subsistence farming is practised throughout the whole region of which Taleland forms a part. The culture of its inhabitants likewise represents a far more widely spread type. Before we embark on our sociological analysis we must know what sort of a unit we are dealing with. Have the people of Taleland any form of cultural or structural unity and singularity that differentiates them from neighbouring socio-geographical areas? Or are they a fraction of a greater society arbitrarily circumscribed to suit the convenience of the field worker?

101 619 The question is not so easy to answer as might be expected. For the natives of Taleland, like the other so-called 'tribes' north of the Gambaga scarp, have no obvious political unity distinguishing them from like political units. In terms of their own political and social organization there is no single government exercising authority over all the people of Taleland, and only over them, within their own defined territory. This has been the most serious obstacle confronting British administration in this area.[1] We must approach the problem from a different angle.

197 101 In the literature and in administrative practice the inhabitants of Taleland are called the Tallensi[2] and are distinguished as a 'tribe' from neighbouring 'tribes', the Kusaasi on the east, the Namnam or Nabdam on the north, the Nankansi or Gorənsi (in Talni, *Gɔrisi*) on the west, the Mamprusi on the south of them. All these groups speak dialects of Mole-Dagbane. But Kusal, Nabte, and Gɔrni are closely akin to Mole, whereas Talni and Mampurule have closer affinities with Dagbane. These dialect areas have no strict boundaries. At the frontiers one passes through [191] intermediate zones where the people speak intermediate dialects or are equally familiar with two contiguous dialects. But it is clearly recognized, both by the natives and by outside observers, that the tribes enumerated above have more in common with one another linguistically than any of them have with the peoples of the same cultural type farther away, such as the Woolisi (usually called the Kassena in the literature and by the

[1] For an outline of Tale political organization and a discussion of some of the theoretical problems raised by it, see *African Political Systems*, edited by M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Oxford, 1940.

[2] *Sc.* Talense (Rattray), Talansi (Cardinall), sing. Talenga, Talanga. This form, correctly Talənsi, sing. Talɔna, is taken from the dialect of the Zuarungu district (Gorəni, or in the dialect of the Tallensi, Gɔrni). The artificial spelling I use has been adopted to show that the Tallensi regard this phonetic form as a foreigners' version of the name by which they designate themselves. In their own dialect (Talni) they call themselves Talis, sing. Talɔna. Talni forms will henceforth be used for all vernacular words in the text.

[p. 14]

[p. 15]

SKETCH-MAP OF TALELAND

*Note:* All place-names are spelt phonetically according to their Talni form.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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Administration) of Navrongo or the Bulisi (Builsa) of Kanjaga district, whose tongues are not intelligible to Mole or Dagbane speakers.

In the same way it is well known that the Kusaasi, Namnam, Gorənsi, and Tallensi are more closely allied in culture *inter se* than they are with other neighbouring 'tribes'. In this part of West Africa one can often tell where a person comes from by his facial cicatrizations.[1] People of these four groups all have the same facial marks, a slashed scar (*bɛn*) running diagonally downwards from the bridge of the nose across one or both cheeks, which are, in addition, often embellished with a neat tracery of tiny incisions (*yiis*) spreading in herring-bone lines over the forehead and down to the neck. These markings are an emblem of their cultural uniformity, as compared with neighbouring groups. Mamprusi and Mossi, frankly contemptuous of their nakedness and poverty, lump them all together under the sobriquet 'Gorənsi'. Since the coming of the white man they have been called 'the Farafaras' and they are beginning to accept this appellation, which is said to be derived from one of their customary expressions of greeting, *ni i fara-fara-fara*.

There are, in short, no precise linguistic or cultural boundaries between these four groups. Nor are there precise political or structural boundaries between them. They overlap with one another in every way; and further research would, I am certain, show that the Kusaasi, Namnam, and Gorənsi also overlap to some extent with their neighbours other than the Tallensi. At the same time, each of these four groups is considered by members of the other three and by its own members to be in some way a distinct territorial, linguistic, and cultural group. It is, however, a distinction of degree, not of kind. Each group comprises a cluster of communities which have more in common among themselves, linguistically and in the details and nuances of custom, belief, and values, than any of them have with other neighbouring communities. They have closer social ties among themselves than any of them have with their other neighbours, though they have no apparent political unity and never, in the past, combined for war against external enemies or for common defence.

This largely implicit feeling of their difference from neighbouring dialect areas which prevails amongst such a cluster of communities is not based on a conception of tribal unity. Sharp distinctions of custom, belief, and values, as well as of structural relationships, are recognized within the cluster. They are, indeed, of fundamental importance for the social interrelations of the communities making up the cluster. On the same principle as before, the cluster is subdivided into smaller constellations of communities which have more in common, closer bonds, *inter se*, than any of them have with other communities. Culturally, and structurally, as we shall discover in the course of our study, society in the Volta region is built up on a segmentary principle. The degree of unity, coherence, autonomy, or singularity of a socio-geographic segment of

[1] These distinguishing facial marks were noted by the first European traveller who visited the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, the Frenchman Binger. Cf. Binger, Capitaine, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée*, 1893, vol. ii, pp. 34–7. For diagrams of these markings see Armitage, C. H., *The Tribal Markings and Marks of Adornment of the Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, Royal Anthropological Institute, 1924, especially figs. 4, 6, 26.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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society is a function of its segmentary relations to other like regions and to more inclusive regions, up to the limit of the widest frame of social reference relevant for that region. In consequence, social groups are identified in relation to one another by a technique of contraposition. This is very clearly seen among the Tallensi.

*Cultural Segmentation of the Tallensi*

From Zuarungu one can see the silhouette of the Tong Hills bounding the horizon seven miles to the south. That, say the people of Zuarungu, is where the Tallensi live. As a group they consider themselves to be quite distinct from the Tallensi, though many individuals have kinsmen among the latter—their own mothers' people, or more distant cognatic kinsmen, or affinal relatives. Even nowadays, when women and children can travel safely anywhere, intercourse between Zuarungu and the Tallensi is confined almost entirely to trade in the markets. In former times it was more than a Zuarungu man's life was worth to venture amongst the Tallensi unless he had kinsfolk there to protect him.

Between Zuarungu and the Tong Hills stretches an unbroken chain of settlements—Biuk, Ba'ari, Zubiuŋ, Tongo, Wakii, and Soog. The people of Biuk speak Gorni and consider themselves an outpost of Zuarungu. But a number of them live across the watercourse which separates their land from that of Ba'ari, side by side with Ba'ari families and farming on Ba'ari soil.[1] Such overlapping of contiguous settlements is common. The Ba'ari people are Tallensi, though a great many of them understand Gorni as easily as their mother tongue owing to their contiguity with Goris. Gorni forms have even crept into their vocabulary. Between them and their Gore neighbours there is much intermarriage; but the insistence on their distinctness remains. The picture is the same from whichever direction one enters Taleland. At Gar I was once told 'We are Namnam-Tallensi'—an accurate enough description of their linguistically and culturally intermediate position.

And yet, everywhere along the frontier the Tong Hills are pointed out as the real centre of the Tallensi. To the testimony of their neighbours may be added that of the Administration which has always regarded the Tallensi as a distinct, if amorphous, political unit.

The easiest if most superficial approach to the social structure of a society is through the nomenclature of social identification, the techniques by which people sort out their relations to one another in order to know how to conduct themselves. But nomenclature, like the conduct it tends to precipitate, is always a function of a situation, not an absolute classification.

Foreigners and their neighbours have a single label for all the Tallensi. The latter equally make no distinction in nomenclature between one Gorəŋ and another, or one Nabt and another, no matter where he may come from, when the circumstances require no more precise specification.

This technique of identification is based on locality, direction, propinquity, and actual or alleged contrasts of language and institutions; it is a technique of contraposition arising from the segmentary structure of the society, and is the commonest method of social classification employed

[1] And Biuk is also linked to the Tallensi by clanship as we shall see (Ch. IV).

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101 in the culture of this area. A member of one social group identifies another social group or individual by comparison or contrast with his own social identity, and in terms of the most inclusive grouping which suffices to identify the latter unambiguously. The exact identification is relative to the frame of reference common to both parties.

101 304 Wherever he may come from in Taleland, a man calls himself a Talǝŋ in contrast to non-Tallensi, citing differences of speech and custom. Thus, female circumcision is practised over a large part of the Northern Territories. All the Tallensi think it a repugnant custom, and say: 'We Talis don't do that—it is a custom (lit. work) of the Gǝris (*Tam Talis pu ɛt lan—Gǝris tuomǝr nla*).' But Tallensi from different parts of Taleland draw almost equally sharp distinctions amongst themselves, using the same technique of contraposition.

361 103 133 621 To understand this we must consider the spatial distribution of Tale settlements. For Tale social structure is inseparable from the spatial relations of social units. We shall start from Tongo (Talni, *Tɔŋ*), about a mile from the foot of the hills (see sketch-map, p. 15), one of the most thickly populated settlements in the country and regarded by the Administration as the capital of Taleland. Typically of this part of the country, Tongo and the settlements adjacent to it on all sides—Ba'ari, Zubiuŋ, Zoo, Soog, Wakii, and Gbeog—form a continuous area of habitation thickly studded with homesteads. Beyond this aggregate stretches another ring of settlements indistinguishably continuous with it at many points. On one side of Ba'ari live its Gǝre neighbours, on the other is Yayazuor, which is separated only by small hillocks and a block of bush-farms from Kpatia, Kpal, and Gbee. The farthest homesteads of Zubiuŋ lie against a low bulge in the plain from the bouldery tip of which one looks down on Sǝk and Yamǝlǝg, a mile or two away. Zoo and Gbambee merge into one another and overlook Woo. Soog, Wakii, and Gbeog encircle the slopes of the Tong Hills and are separated from Tɛnzugu, the settlement in the fertile hollow embracing almost the entire summit, only by the ridge of enormous boulders which forms the crown. Gbeog overlaps Ka'ar, which is continuous with Gorogo, Sipaat, and Sii. These settlements climb right up into the gullies and amongst the boulders of the slope of the Hills and straggle out across the broad plain to blend with Dkoog. The homesteads of Sii curl round the nose of the Hills to mingle with those on the outskirts of Yinduur and Zandoya, on the other side below the rim of the Hills. A mile farther along, at the foot of the Hills on their eastern side, are the more scattered homesteads of Santɛŋ, Teelǝg, Syɛk, and Wǝyar, separated from Tɛnzugu only by the brow of the Hills.

This compact block of settlements is barely separated from a similar block five or six miles north-east of the Hills which begins at Sawalǝg. Between Zoo and Yamǝlǝg lies a mile or so of stony hummocks, covered in parts with the low scrub which shows that it had been cultivated and then abandoned. This is where many people from Tongo and Zoo have their bush-farms. Yamǝlǝg occupies a shallow depression between hillocks.

361 103 621 Then comes a stretch of two or three miles of typical orchard bush before the homesteads of Sawalǝg and Sie are reached. Thence a traveller can

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continue through Sie-Tɛndaaŋ or Namɔyalug to Gban, Gar, and Kpatia or to Buug, Duusi, Datɔk, and beyond to Pieluŋ and Nangodi with scarcely a break in the continuity of settlement.

In addition to these two main blocks of settlements—let us call them, for convenience, the Tongo district and the Sie district—there are scattered Tale settlements, separated from them and from one another by stretches of bush, between them and the Volta rivers—Namooraana, Diga'ar, Tola, Kumbude, Biuŋ, and Gbiug-on-the-river being the most important. But other settlements on the frontiers of Taleland, the inhabitants of which are not recognized as Tallensi by outsiders, also fall into the framework of their political geography.

The first puzzle a stranger must unravel, if he hopes to understand the life of our people, is the apparent contradiction between the density of residential aggregation and the cleavages underlying their social relations. He will meet it latent in simple and casual occurrences, or conspicuously overt in organized collective events such as the communal hunting and fish drives, the Great Festivals, or other ceremonial gatherings.

Taleland is thickly populated. The Tongo district alone has a population of over 12,000 according to the 1931 census. This area of ancient habitation—*tɛŋ kɔrəg*, an old country, as the natives describe it—has supported a sedentary population for a period which cannot be less than several centuries. Sacrifices are made on graves of ancestors said to have lived ten or eleven generations ago. No one familiar with the people would doubt the authenticity of these graves; but the three centuries or so of settlement this implies must, I believe, be considered a minimum period. Centuries of intermarriage have woven a web of kinship which embraces the whole country. The patterns of institutions and ideas are uniform throughout Taleland. Yet a fundamental dogma of their collective life is that of local and sectional particularism, and of divergence within the common patterns.

### *The 'Real Talis'*

Neither the Tongo people, nor those living in the Sie district, are considered to be real Talis; the 'real Talis' are the folk who live on and around the Tong Hills. The Great Festivals are usually cited as a decisive criterion of classification. The 'real Talis' (*Talis mɛŋa*), a Tɛnzugu elder once stated, are in the following places: Tɛnzugu, Santɛŋ, Yinduur, Sii, Gorogo, Wakii, Gbeog, and Soog, as well as the small settlements near Santɛŋ and the offshoots of Wakii at Gbambee and Woo. '*Tam tɔmɔra Talis tuntuoma, ti Gɔlib ni ti Bɔyaraam*—We perform the works of Talis, our *Gɔlib* and *Bɔyaraam* festivals.' Tongo and Zoo, Yamɔlag and Sie, are Namoos, he continued; and Zubiuŋ and Sɔk, Ba'ari and Yaɣazuor, belong more closely to the Namoos than to the Talis. '*Bam tɔmɔra namoorɔt*—They celebrate (lit. work) after the Namoo fashion, the *Giŋgaaŋ* and *Da'a* festivals.' There remain Sawalag, Sie-Tɛndaaŋ, Duusi, and the settlements close to them. '*Bam lɩbɔra Namnam sani*—They fall in with the Namnam' (whose chief festival is called *Tɛɣɔn-lɩbɔgɔt.*)[1]

[1] A brief account of one aspect of these festivals is given in my paper 'Ritual

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The Zubiuŋ and Ba'ari people, however, do not accept this classification, which expresses the orientation of Tɛnzugu, without qualifications. The former admit their close territorial and political assimilation to Tongo, but they insist on their cultural distinctness, associating themselves, in this respect, with the Hill Talis. They quote in support other discriminatory indices than the Great Festivals. Firstly, like all the Talis, they do not have the avoidances of the first-born children distinctive of all Namoos (see below, Chap. V). On the contrary, all people of Zubiuŋ descent avoid eating tortoise (*pakur*), turtle (*mieŋ*), and cat (*sakoo*), the first two of which are also taboo to most of the Hill Talis. Secondly, they cite their mortuary and funeral ritual, the two points of crucial divergence being that they, like most of the Talis, dress the dead in a loin cover of sheepskin (*suona pchug*), whereas the Namoos use a goatskin (*suona buu*); and that to conclude a funeral they *ŋma ma'ala* with the sacrifice of many fowls, whereas the Namoos *ŋma wɔŋar*—a totally different rite in which weapons and household utensils are offered to the departed spirit. Finally, Zubiuŋ people say: '*Tam diŋa tɛndaan, ti·pu diit naam la*—We (like all Talis) have (lit. eat) the tɛndaanaship (i.e. the ritual office of Custodian of the Earth), we do not have the chiefship (like the Namoos).'

The Ba'ari people, with the added self-assurance due to their political independence of Tongo, declare themselves to be Talis on the same grounds, though their totemic avoidances differ from those of the hill folk. As a clinching argument they point out that the Great Festivals celebrated by the Talis form part of a cycle inaugurated by the senior Ba'ari tɛndaana.

Tongo shares the views of Zubiuŋ and Ba'ari about their relationship to the Talis. Very often at a Zubiuŋ funeral I could not help being amused at the behaviour of Tongo visitors. Close neighbours though they are of Zubiuŋ with which they have, individually, innumerable ties of cognatic and affinal kinship, they always adopted a posture in keeping with this structural cleavage. They would sit all together, at a little distance from the spot where the rites were in progress, punctiliously preserving an appearance of indifference, as befits outsiders. At the same time, Tongo people emphasize their specially close local and political ties with their immediate neighbours which mark the latter off from the Hill Talis in certain respects. Similar distinctions are made in the Sie district. A Tongo, Ba'ari, or Tɛnzugu man bound for Sie or Datɔk says, 'I am going to Nabrug (the country of the Namnam)', unless it is necessary to be more precise. The people of Sie and a number of the neighbouring settlements are Namoos; yet talking about farming they say: 'The Talis always sow first and then we follow'—referring thus to all the settlements south-west of Zoo. But when they are discussing war or marriage, ritual or chiefship, they distinguish between Tongo and Zoo on the one hand—*ti mabiis*, our brethren—and the real Talis on the other. At Duusi and Sie-Tɛndaaŋ dwell the senior tɛndaanas of the district, whose social and ritual status is identical with that of the tɛndaanas of the Tongo district. 'Talaŋ' in contraposition to themselves means essentially someone from the vicinity

[CBO] Festivals and Social Cohesion in the Hinterland of the Gold Coast', *American Anthropologist*, vol. xxxviii, No. 4.

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of the Tong Hills; yet 'we and the Talis are one' they maintain. In proof of this they point out that their *Tɛŋən-lɛbəgət* Festival belongs to the same cycle as *Da'a* and *Bɔyaraam*, though they have but the vaguest hearsay knowledge of the esoteric ritual of these festivals. Their neighbours at Sie and Datɔk they call Namoos.

*Note*: For convenience of exposition we shall adopt the following convention in this book. Whenever we speak of all the inhabitants of Taleland, irrespective of their internal subdivisions, we shall use the name given to them by other outsiders and speak of them as *Tallensi*. When we wish to refer to that section of the Tallensi whom they themselves describe as the 'real Talis', we shall refer to them as *Talis*, distinguishing among them, when necessary, between the *Hill Talis*, who live on and around the Tong Hills, and the Talis of the Plain, who live nearer Tongo (i.e. Zubiuŋ, Gbizug, Ba'ari, Yayazuor).

*Nomenclature and the Structural Scheme*

This nomenclature reflects a structural scheme of considerable complexity. It points to institutional allegiances which segregate adjacent social units from each other and group together spatially dispersed units. The major cleavage it reveals is that between the Namoo communities, on the one hand, and the settlements of the real Talis and of those who claim to be akin to them, on the other. But it indicates, also, that there are other lines of division and bonds of union both within each major grouping and cutting across the cleavage. It is a cardinal principle of Tale social structure that every social grouping defined as a unit in one situation, or according to one principle, dissolves into an association of lesser and differentiated units in another situation or according to another principle. Variation in custom or in ideological emphasis is regarded by the natives as one of the most significant indices of group differentiation. It is also, as we shall see, an important factor of social integration.

It is therefore a topic of perennial interest to the natives to observe and comment on variations of usage and doctrine. The idea that identity of custom and belief is desirable or natural is inconceivable. Everybody adheres staunchly to the forms of social behaviour accepted in his own group without desiring to impose them on others. 'Look at the Namoos,' observed Ta'aŋ one day, 'don't they (i.e. different sections of the same clan) do different things at funeral ceremonies? But their use of a goat (in mortuary rites), that is all one. We Talis, again, using our sheep (in mortuary rites)—this is the same for all of us. But as for our ritual, we split up and do different things.' Each one with his father's ways, everyone with his ancestor's ways (*Sɔ ni u ba yɛl, ɔ ni u yaab yɛl*)—that is, every group has its distinctive ancestral customs—is a characteristic Tale aphorism. This attitude, emphasizing simultaneously community and differentiation, similarity of pattern, and divergence of detail, permeates Tale thought.

*Myths of Origin*

Whenever Tallensi discuss the cleavages in their society they trace

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In marked contrast is the average person's ignorance of settlements, even near at hand, with which his clan has no close social bonds or with which he has no personal links of kinship or friendship. Tallensi acquire their knowledge of geography and natural history gradually in childhood, by direct experience. It is already well established by the age of 9 or 10, and grows *pari passu* with the expansion of the child's social space. The basis of this is the child's natal settlement, where, except for occasional visits to kinsfolk elsewhere, it spends its entire childhood. But even adults had little liberty of movement in the past, since they could hardly go unmolested in settlements unrelated to theirs by clanship or political ties or where they had no kinsfolk. Most of the older people have never been outside Taleland, and many of them have never, or only rarely, visited some of the settlements within an hour's walk of their own.

A Talaŋ inevitably has a profound emotional attachment to his native settlement. It is striking how many Tale emigrants return home eventually after years of absence, casting aside the flesh-pots of Ashanti or the rich fields of Mampurugu. '*Kpala m-mah*—Here it is pleasant', they say, in spite of the penury of existence; for here are your kith and kin, here is the scene of your childhood joys and sorrows, and above all, the abode of your forefathers. The Talaŋ's empirical knowledge of his habitat is the precipitate in his thought and experience of the economic and structural facts that determine the local fixity of his native settlement. His affective attachment to it finds an institutionalized expression and support in the ancestor cult.

*Settlement Boundaries*

The hub of Taleland is Tongo (see map on p. 15). This ancient settlement, geographically central and politically nodal in the network of interclan relations, provides a very good model of the structure of a typical Tale settlement.

As we know, the Tongo branch of Mosuor biis live in such close spatial and social propinquity with Zubiuŋ, Gbizug, and Zoo that these clans are often spoken of collectively as 'the people of Tongo (Tɔŋdɛm)'. For precision, Tongo proper is referred to as Tɔŋ-Nayiri—the Chief's House of Tongo—all over Taleland. Throughout the Mole-Dagbane-speaking region clans which hold a chiefship are thus identified by reference to it. Those which have tɛndaanas are sometimes called Tɛndaaŋ, on the same principle. Thus outsiders distinguish between Sie-Nayiri and Sie-Tɛndaaŋ.

Tɔŋ-Nayiri, Tongo proper, forms an irregular block of homesteads, somewhat less than three square miles in area and is one of the largest settlements in Taleland. It comprised, in 1934, 192 homesteads and a total population of about 2,400.[1] This does not include Tongo people

[1] Calculations, based on my own census samples and on figures kindly supplied to me by the A.D.C. Zuarungu, show that in Taleland the average number of people of both sexes and all ages occupying a homestead is 12 to 14. Owing to the variation in the constitution of homesteads this figure must be accepted with reserve; but it is sufficient for a rough estimate of population in a country where accurate statistics do not exist.

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living at Zoo and Gbambee, though they are an integral part of the community.

Like all Tale settlements Tongo has no fixed territorial boundaries. (See map at end of book.) Its frontiers with the circumjacent settlements take the form of a social circumference, kept in being by local, genealogical, and politico-ritual ties and cleavages. This is the line of ecological and social balance between Tongo and its neighbours, more or less stable now, but still undergoing minor readjustments as this balance changes with alterations in the internal equilibrium of any of these units. It is most stable and firm where the genealogical, political, and ideological cleavages between Tongo and its neighbours are clear-cut and dominant; it is more pervious where Tongo's structural ties with an adjacent clan have greater strength than the cleavages between them. Thus, there is a distinct though sometimes narrow territorial separation between the outermost homesteads of Tongo and those of Wakii, Soog, Gbeog, and Ba'ari. At one point on the west side of Tongo only a stretch of cultivation separates Tongo homesteads from Wakii homesteads a stone's throw away. Tongo homesteads actually lie on the Wakii side of the watercourse which might have formed a natural boundary between them. On the south this watercourse and a straggling outcrop of rocks and boulders hedge in Tongo and mark it off from Wakii. A prominent landmark here is Samoo, a mass of huge rocks overgrown with trees and scrub. It is a sacred spot, the External *Bɔyar* of Soog and Gbeog. North of Samoo lies Tongo, the nearest Tongo homestead being about 50 yards away; south of it are Wakii and Soog. It would be most unlikely for a Tongo man to build his homestead on the south side of Samoo, or for a Soog or Wakii man to live north of it. For Samoo symbolizes all that the Namoos consider alien, hostile, and to some extent repugnant, in the cultural differences and structural cleavages between themselves and the Hill Talis. In olden days the immediate vicinity of Samoo was the no-man's-land where the two groups used to meet in battle.

Soog, Wakii, Gbeog, and Ba'ari, all Talis clans that were among the traditional enemies of Tongo in war, are all demarcated from the latter. On the border between Tongo and each of these clans is a stretch of land, cultivated or uncultivated, but free of homesteads, which is still thought of as the traditional battle-ground of the two groups. It is significant that these battle-grounds are all associated with Earth or *Bɔyar* shrines under the ritual jurisdiction of the Talis clans.

By contrast it is impossible to draw a clear line between the homesteads of Tongo and those of Zubiun or Zoo. They merge completely. This corresponds to the close ties which have always existed between these three units and have enabled them to fuse easily into a single political community under the authority of the Chief of Tongo, since his acquisition of judicial and executive power under British rule.

In the old days Zubiun and Zoo always fought on the side of Tongo against the Hill Talis. Both clans have direct politico-ritual roles in connexion with the Tongo chiefship, and come into its immediate field of influence, whereas the Hill Talis and Ba'ari come into its secondary field of influence. The three clans act as *sunzɔp*-by-courtesy (cf. ch. V) to

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and the Earth when representatives of the various clans gather to perform one of the great annual ceremonies, as their ritual obligations compel them to, even though they are nowadays divided into two hostile camps. For these are the occasions when the essential unity of Tɛnzugu—a unity in relation to which the six clans rank merely as *yizugɔt*—can rightly be insisted upon, when frank reproaches verging on warnings of spiritual retribution can be directed against the destroyers of this unity.

Yet in other situations the component maximal lineages of a particular Tɛnnugu clan are referred to as its *yizugɔt*. Thus, in connexion with their distinct ritual offices in the cult of the External *Boyar* or their divergent clanship linkages, the three maximal lineages of Bunkiuk are always described as *yizugɔt*. For, like the clan in relation to its neighbour clans, the maximal lineage forms a distinct genealogical and residential unity within the clan settlement. Looked at from within, each maximal lineage is a relatively autonomous integral unit, the majority of whose members live close together inside its social boundaries, which are defined in relation to the other lineages of the clan in the same way as those of the clan settlement are defined in relation to neighbouring clans. The difference is one of degree only, the social boundaries of a lineage within a clan being more fluid than those of a clan. The stability of a settlement rests on the equilibrium of its sections with one another, and this depends upon their being precisely differentiated from one another.

*The Sections of Tongo*

Tongo proper (Tɔŋ-Nayiri) has four *yizugɔt*—Puhug, Guŋ, Seug, and Kuorɔg. Two roads, laid down some years ago by the Administration, which intersect almost at right angles where the Resthouse stands (see map at end of book), by chance afford a convenient set of co-ordinates for describing its layout. Puhug occupies most of the south-western quadrant and a corner of the south-eastern quadrant, most of which is Kuorɔg. Seug is an irregular block in the north-eastern quadrant. Guŋ is divided: part of it, Guŋ proper, lies across the watercourse to the west of Puhug; but the majority of its members live in the north-western quadrant, in a broad wedge between Zubiuŋ and Gbizug known as Dekpieŋ. A few Guŋ homesteads also lie on the border between Seug and Zoo. Nevertheless, scattered as it is, Guŋ constitutes a single *yizug* in all corporate affairs except those connected with modern administrative demands. In the latter the local criterion prevails, Dekpieŋ having its own headman and the Guŋ homesteads at Seug coming under the supervision of the Seug headman. Members of all four sections live at Zoo and at Gbambee, but they always act with their respective sections in matters of common concern.

The names of these sections are typical of section and settlement names all over the country. Puhug gets its name from an ancient *puhug* or *punga* (*Tamarindus Indica*) tree, which is said to have stood at the edge of the sacred dancing-ground in the centre of the section from time immemorial. It died long ago, but old men still remember seeing its stump. Guŋ is called after the silk-cotton tree (*Ceiba Pentandra*; Talni, *guŋ*) so common in the country. Trees of all kinds, and especially those as tall as the

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621 101 137 silk-cotton, are prominent landmarks in a country of monotonous plains; hence settlements and sections often bear the names of species of trees found there.

621 101 Kuorəg was thus named, according to popular etymology, because the Soog Yikpɛmdaana, who holds the ritual jurisdiction over the land on which the homesteads of Kuorəg stand, ritually allocated or 'cut' (*kuo*) the sites for all these homesteads when Tongo men first settled there. In the same way popular etymology explains the name Dekpieŋ ('it is hard') as derived from the hardness (*kpeoŋ*) of the soil in that part of the settlement as compared with that of Puhug or Seug. Seug literally means 'the rainy season', but no one in Tongo was ever able to suggest how this section acquired its name; and this is characteristic of very many settlement and section names in Taleland.

621 173 To the people of Tongo their present residential constellation is the visible deposit, as it were, of the continuous expansion of the sub-clan through many generations within the limits of its geographical environment and social boundaries. They read the spatial disposition of the four sections as a record of their structural evolution, as a map of the contemporary constitution, and as proof of the chronological retrospect of the sub-clan. Mosuor came to settle at Puhug, where his grave still marks the site of his homestead. As his posterity increased in numbers, they began to move outwards in the same way as young men migrate to Zoo, Gbambee, and farther, nowadays, and for the same reason, shortage of farm-land. Thus Guŋ, Kuorəg, and Seug were occupied. Later, the descendants of those who founded Guŋ became too numerous for the land available there, and, prevented from expanding into Wakii by the social barriers between Tongo and that clan, filtered gradually into the area that is now Dekpieŋ. Arguing from what may be observed nowadays, they say that this was largely a process of occupying hitherto vacant land at a time when the population was very small. But it was partly, also, a process of dispossessing and pushing out to their present location the people of Zubiuŋ and of Gbizug, who claim to have lived at Puhug originally. In proof of this they cite their myths of origin, the fact that the dancing-ground in Puhug is sacred because it is the site of Tɛndaan Gɛnɔt's homestead, and the ritual jurisdiction exercised over part of the land of Puhug by Gbizug and over the remainder by Zubiuŋ. Indeed, there are Zubiuŋ graves on land now occupied by Dekpieŋ men which are said to date back only three to five generations. This proves that the people of Zubiuŋ were still yielding ground to the Tɔndɛm, as they themselves admit, when elders alive to-day were 'already born'.

621 577 There is nothing derogatory in such a retreat. On the contrary, Gbizug and Zubiuŋ elders boast of it as additional evidence of the dependence of the people of Tongo on their ritual benevolence and bounty. It is a cardinal rule of Tale ethics that a request for land to build on and farm—especially if it comes from a kinsman, friend, or neighbour—may not be refused if it can be granted without hardship. There was formerly, and there still is to a small extent, land to spare at Gbizug and at Zubiuŋ. Tongo people have innumerable ties of kinship and neighbourhood with Gbizug and Zubiuŋ, which are the more effective on account of the ties

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